

Newtonville Area Council Makes Strategic Recommendations to Revitalize Newtonville Supports coordinating plans for Walnut St. revitalization and Austin St. development

NEWTONVILLE, MA – March 13, 2014. Since first taking office in January, 2014, the Newtonville Area Council has made key recommendations to the City of Newton to improve downtown Newtonville. The recommendations were conveyed to the Mayor and Planning Department in three separate letters sent in January 21st, February 24th, and February 27th, 2014.

The City previously announced plans to select a bidder for the Austin Street development, negotiate a contract, and then solicit public comment on the developer's proposed plan.

Key recommendations:

- Complete a downtown Newtonville traffic and parking study before (a) selection of a developer for the Austin St. public parking lot, and (b) implementation of the revitalization of Walnut St.
- Before selecting a bidder for the proposed development of the Austin St. parking lot, decide on criteria for the project. Include factors such as architectural design, public parking capacity, building scale, residential density, integration with current businesses, and community space. Make these criteria the conditions that a developer must meet.
- Consider reinstituting public parking spaces on Walnut St. that were removed when bump outs were added last year. Ensure the revitalization of Walnut has minimal impact on public parking.
- Increase pedestrian safety by installing motion sensitive lights (either overhead or imbedded in the street) at each crosswalk, in addition to creating a new cross walk color and/or texture.
- Integrate into the planning process for the Walnut Street revitalization and for the Austin St. Development: ongoing collaboration between the Area Council and both the Department of Public Works and the Planning Department.

These recommendations complement two recent Area Council studies:

- A public opinion poll of Newtonville residents and businesses about the proposed Austin St. development.
- An analysis by six Newton-based architects and landscape architects of the three top-ranked proposals for the Austin St. development.

Since the delivery of these recommendations, the City has announced plans to conduct a downtown Newtonville traffic and parking study, deliverable by April 1st.

<http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/57366>

The Area Council's full recommendations, results of its survey on Austin St., and its architectural analysis can be found at <http://www.newtonville.org>

The Newtonville Area Council

The Newtonville Area Council <http://www.newtonville.org> advises the Board of Aldermen and the City of Newton on issues concerning the village of Newtonville, Massachusetts. The Area Council's nine members are elected by registered voters within the Newtonville district.

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